

Working Group Meeting Notes
December 17, 2008
10:00am - 12:00pm
County Administration Center – Tower 6
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101

Summary of Surveys Completed in 2008 and Surveys to be Completed in 2009

Brock Ortega, Senior Project Manager and Wildlife Biologist with Dudek and Associates, provided the Working Group with a summary of the surveys completed in 2008 in accordance with the April 2008 Scope of Work for monitoring of ~1,300 acres of land currently under the management of the Preserve Owner/Manager (POM) (minus the lands designated as Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) by the Army Corps of Engineers – Exhibit A). The attached table provides a summary of the tasks, methodology, and survey results completed in 2008 and identifies surveys to be completed in the Spring of 2009. ***Please note that this table is draft and is to be used for discussion purposes only to assist in determining projects to be completed on POM managed lands.***

Possible POM Funding Available for Expanded/Enhanced Baseline Surveys or Active Management

Reviewing the current POM budget for FY08/09 (Exhibit B) with the Working Group, POM staff identified approximately \$260,000 that may be available for management and/or monitoring tasks:

\$ 20,000	Biological Resources: Expanded/Enhanced Baseline Survey or Active Management
\$ 65,000	Biological Resources: On-going Surveys
\$175,000	Baseline Surveys
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\$260,000	Total monies available for management and/or monitoring tasks

In order to commit these funds for management and/or monitoring tasks, the funds must be encumbered in a contract before the end of the fiscal year. Otherwise, the monies will be added to the carry forward (Reserve) funds.

During this discussion, Wildlife Agency representatives indicated that new vegetation mapping of MSCP preserve lands would begin in 2009. This task may be funded by Feds/State/TransNet funds. Mapping is to start on MSCP preserve lands to the south and progress north. This mapping may relieve the POM from mapping vegetation and rare plants on future conveyance lands.

The following are Working Group suggestions for work to be completed with any remaining funds from FY08/09 budget (not listed by priority):

- Cactus wren surveys (Funding may be obtained through TransNet)
- Vegetation mapping/Rare plant surveys (Feds/State/TransNet may be funding – Susan to confirm)

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- Non-native invasive removal (focus on tamarisk) – Salt Creek POM property ~\$100,000
 - In order for the tamarisk removal to be successful, POM staff will need to work and coordinate with City of San Diego staff to remove invasive plants upstream on City of San Diego Water Department owned land. The City may consider applying for TransNet or Coastal Conservancy grant funds.
- Burn restoration (thinning/dethatching to enhance QCB habitat) – San Ysidro POM property
- Additional/expanded herp arrays and/or longer herp survey sessions (to supplement baseline data Dudek will obtain from 2009 surveys)

Brown Field Bombing Range Discussion

Surveys have been and will continue to be completed on all POM owned and managed lands. However, do to safety and liability issues, the County cannot authorize consultants to monitor or complete management projects on lands located within the Brown Field FUDS designated lands. Brown Field FUDS lands are currently ranked low on the Army Corp of Engineers priority list to clean up unexploded ordnances. The Wildlife Agency representatives encouraged the developers and environmental groups within the Working Group to work together and contact the state legislators to move Brown Field FUDS lands up the priority list.

Michael Beck stated he would draft a letter and engage discussions with state legislators. Kim Kilkenny stated he would support the effort. The letter may cite the high biological value of the area and the need to conduct monitoring and active management/enhancement of the area for Cactus wren, Vernal pool species, Least bell's vireo, etc. Michael requested the following information:

- Brown Field Bombing Range Final Site Inspection Report (County to provide)
- Map overlaying bombing range on preserve lands (County to provide)
- Army Corps of Engineers priority list to clean-up FUDS lands (Rikki Schroeder to provide)
- Estimated cost for clean-up of private property (Rikki Schroeder to provide McMillin estimate)

Revisions to Estimated Budget for FY09/10

For the next Working Group meeting, POM staff committed to revising the estimated FY 09/10 budget (Exhibit C). The FY09/10 Budget will redistribute the monies currently listed on the Draft FY09/10 budget as Baseline and On-going surveys to "Non-native invasive removal" under Preserve Operation and Maintenance (\$100,000) and "Resource Monitoring" (\$200,000). The base budget is assigned the same amount as the maximum tax amount for current fiscal year ~ \$510,000.

A revised FY09/10 budget (Exhibit D) has been provided for the group to discuss at the next Working Group meeting.

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Update on Legal Access Issue for Conveyed Lands

POM staff provided update on the legal access issue for conveyed lands. The Working Group was informed that the developers are required to provide permanent legal access to the conveyed parcels in the form of a recorded easement. For access through City of San Diego parcels, Chula Vista staff will be coordinating with the City of San Diego to identify the process for recording an easement on those parcels currently needed to access lands to be conveyed, and further discuss with the City of San Diego the possibility of reducing the processing costs for the developers.

In order to obtain access to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) lands, POM staff will consider obtaining a temporary right-of-entry from CDFG while a permanent easement is processed through the Wildlife Conservation Board. POM staff will need to confirm with CDFG, but it's the understanding that a temporary right-of-entry can be processed at a staff-level, which may be done in a more timely manner. POM staff will continue to keep the Working Group apprised of any new information.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 5, 2009

1:00pm – 3:00pm
County of San Diego, Department of Parks and Recreation Office
9150 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 200 - Sycamore Room
San Diego, CA 92123

**Otay Ranch Reserve Biological Monitoring
Table of Tasks, Completion, Brief Methods, and Results (1/1/2009)**

Task	Completed	Date Range	Methodology	Survey Results
1.1 Vegetation base mapping	Yes	6/12/08 – 6/17/08	Vegetation communities were mapped in the field directly onto a 300-scale (one inch = 300 feet) infra-red aerial photograph of the site. In some areas, a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver was used to delineate the boundaries of vegetation types. Mapping was evaluated and refined in portions of the site in conjunction with subsequent wildlife surveys.	<p><i>Salt Creek Preserve</i> Seven sensitive upland plant communities – annual (non-native) grassland, chamise chaparral, (Diegan) coastal sage scrub, maritime succulent scrub, scrub oak chaparral, southern mixed chaparral, and valley and foothill grassland – and five variants (combined or disturbed forms). Four wetland plant communities – cismontane alkali marsh, coastal and valley freshwater marsh, mule fat scrub, and southern willow scrub – and five variants. Four non-sensitive plant communities / land covers including: disturbed habitat, developed, eucalyptus woodland, and ornamental.</p> <p><i>San Ysidro Preserve</i> Four sensitive upland plant communities – annual grassland, coastal sage scrub, chamise chaparral, and southern mixed chaparral – and five variants (combined or disturbed forms). A total of four wetland or riparian plant communities – coast live oak woodland, disturbed wetlands, mule fat scrub, and disturbed sycamore alluvial woodland. The only non-sensitive land cover present is disturbed habitat.</p>
1.2 Floral survey - summer	Yes	May 2008– ref plant check; 6/12/2008 – 6/17/2008 survey	<p>The potential for special-status plant species to occur on each site was evaluated based on the elevation, soils, vegetation communities, and level of disturbance of each site. Sensitive cacti, perennial species, and summer-occurring species would have been observed.</p> <p>Surveys consisted of meandering pedestrian transects through all suitable habitat in the Reserve.</p>	<p><i>Salt Creek Preserve</i> Five special-status plant species were observed: Tecate cypress <i>Calitropsis</i> (=Cupressus) <i>forbesii</i>, San Diego barrel cactus (<i>Ferocactus viridescens</i>), San Diego marsh-elder (<i>Iva hayesiana</i>), San Diego County viguiera (<i>Viguiera laciniata</i>) and Southwestern spiny rush. A total of 41 special-status plant species have been observed or have a moderate to high potential to occur onsite.</p> <p><i>San Ysidro Preserve</i> Three special-staus plant species were observed: Tecate cypress, San Diego barrel cactus, and southwestern spiny rush. A total of 41 special-status plant species have been observed or have a moderate to high potential to occur onsite.</p>

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1.2 Invasive plant survey	Yes	July 2008	Surveys included mapping polygons of invasive species (e.g., tamarix, eucalyptus, pepper trees, mustard, non-native grasses) of individuals of particularly noxious species (e.g., eucalyptus, pepper, tamarix)	<p>Salt Creek Preserve 42 acres of <i>Tamarix ramossima</i> plus an additional 11 trees. 3 acres of <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> plus an additional 5 trees. 3.2 acres of <i>Schinus molle</i> plus an additional 5 trees. 29 <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> and 1 <i>Nicotiana vulgare</i> plants. Additional widespread annual grasses.</p> <p>San Ysidro Preserve General area is recovering from fire. Annual grasses, but not dominating currently.</p>
Spring sensitive plant survey (Additional Services per Contract)	No	April/May 2009	Focused surveys for spring-occurring special-status plant species still need to be conducted. Examination of reference populations of Otay tarplant (<i>Deinandra conjugens</i>) and other late-spring blooming plants in mid-May indicated that these plants were not detectable in 2008. The lack of germination or early or incomplete life cycles of these plants was likely due to the (early) timing and low levels of winter rainfall followed by atypical spring heat. Surveys will be conducted when appropriate in 2009 as determined by reference population monitoring.	To be determined
1.3 Monthly point counts	Yes	July, August, September, October 2008 (7/17/08-10/29/08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six point count stations at Salt Creek, four at San Ysidro. • Conducted day time (0530-1200 hours) and night time (1030-0000 hours) point counts at all locations. • 10 minutes at each location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total of 41 points recorded. • Nocturnal species included barn owl, great horned owl, and lesser nighthawk.

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1.3 CAGN/CAWR surveys	Yes	7/18/08- 8/22/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted per USFWS protocol (pedestrian transects in suitable habitat with tape playback). Surveyed approximately 786 acres of sage scrub habitat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 21 gnatcatcher pairs were observed within the Salt Creek portion of the Otay Ranch Preserve. Two of the 21 pairs were observed with one juvenile. In addition, 23 non-capped gnatcatchers and 11 individual male gnatcatchers were observed within the Salt Creek portion of the Otay Ranch Preserve. Between 9 and 12 cactus wren family groups were observed during the survey effort. All of these were located on the Salt Creek portion of the Reserve.
1.3 Avian wetland species surveys	Yes	July/August 2008	Surveys conducted in conjunction with CAGN and General butterfly surveys. Consisted of walking through suitable (only marginal habitat present) habitat while looking and listening for the species.	There was no real suitable habitat (dense and broad riparian bands) for yellow-billed cuckoo, no suitable nesting habitat (stands of large riparian trees) for white-faced ibis, and only marginal habitat (small cattail areas) for tricolored blackbirds. None of these species were observed.
1.3 GOEA surveys	Yes	July/August 2008	Surveys were conducted in conjunction with vegetation mapping, sensitive plant surveys, CAGN surveys, and general butterfly surveys and consisted of searching cliff areas for nesting eagles.	Only the San Ysidro Reserve has marginally suitable steep slopes along one of the internal drainages. This area was searched for golden eagle nests but none were observed to be present.
1.4 Pitfall trapping	No	Late spring 2009	Will include a single 4-day trapping period at three locations (2 at Salt Creek and 1 at San Ysidro). Herp arrays will include a “Y” configured silt fence with 7 5-gallon buckets and 3 snake traps.	To be Determined

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1.5 General Butterfly Survey including a single pass survey for Harbison's dun skipper and Hermes copper	Yes	6/20/08-8/8/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian transects through all native habitat conducted by butterfly biologists. • Harbison's dun skipper – Host plant (Cyperus sedges); Flight season (May-July) • Hermes copper – Host plant (Rhamnus crocea); Flight season (May-July) • Pedestrian transects throughout all areas within the preserve supporting the species host plant, spiny redberry (<i>Rhamnus crocea</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 16 butterfly species were observed during surveys including: checkered white (<i>Pontia protodice</i>), acmon blue (<i>Plebejus acmon</i>), Behr's metalmark (<i>Apodemia mormo virgulti</i>), buckeye (<i>Junonia coenia</i>), cabbage white (<i>Pieris rapae</i>), southern blue (<i>Glaucopsyche lygdamus australis</i>), California ringlet (<i>Coenonympha californica californica</i>), tiger swallowtail (<i>Papilio rutulus</i>), Anise swallowtail (<i>Papilo zelicaon lucas</i>), painted lady (<i>Vanessa cardui</i>), Sara orangetip (<i>Anthocharis sara</i>), perplexing hairstreak (<i>Callophrys dumetorum perplexa</i>), California dogface (<i>Colias Eurydice</i>), funereal duskywing (<i>Erynnis funeralis</i>), western pygmy blue (<i>Brephidium exile</i>), and western brown elfin (<i>Incisalia augustinus iriodes</i>). • Surveys for Hermes copper and Harbison's dun skipper were negative.
Focused survey for Quino checkerspot butterfly and Thorne's hairstreak (Additional Services per Contract)	No	March/April 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will conduct 3 survey passes through all suitable habitat on both Reserves. • Will follow protocol methodologies. • Quino checkerspot – Host plant (plantago); Flight season (March-April). • Thorne's hairstreak – Host plant (Tecate cypress); Flight season (March-April) 	To be determined
1.6 mammal – camera stations	No	Spring 2009	5 camera stations will be installed at permanent locations. 3 at Salt Creek and 2 at San Ysidro. They will be run for 21 days, day 1 install, days 7 and 14 check, take down on day 21.	To be determined.
1.7 Baseline Report	No	Summer 2009	Report will include a description of the survey methods, results, and discussion of management recommendations. The report will include appropriate graphics, tables, and appendices.	Report will be completed when all survey work is finished.
Project Management	Ongoing			Includes coordination, meetings.

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